

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the application. In the Office Action dated May 31, 2005, the Examiner objected to the specification and the drawings. Additionally, claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Finally, claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,477,432 ("Chen"). In this Amendment, paragraph [0052] of the specification and claims 1 and 3-12 have been amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the specification and drawings, and the rejection to the claims, in light of the amendment to the specification and claims, and the following remarks.

I. Specification and Drawings

In the Office Action dated May 31, 2005, the Examiner objected to paragraph [0052]² of the specification for use of the acronym SECS without first defining the acronym SECS. Accordingly, Applicants have amended paragraph [0052] to recite that SECS stands for SEMI Equipment Communication Standard as is known in the art. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection to the specification for use of the acronym SECS.

The Examiner additionally objected to the drawings for failing to show element 306. In order to more accurately conform the drawings and the specification, Applicants have amended paragraph [0052] to remove element number 306 from the specification. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection to the drawings for failing to show element 306.

II. The Amended Claims Comply with the 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Examiner stated that the phrases "storing rules," "selecting a sample," and "forming rules" were neither shown in the drawings or properly disclosed in the specification. In order to clarify the

² Paragraph [0052] refers to paragraph numbering in the originally filed application. Paragraph [0052] corresponds to paragraph [0096] in published application no. US 2004/0236528 A1.

claims, Applicants have amended the claims to remove the phrases cited by the Examiner.

The amended claims are supported in the Brief Summary of the Invention and the Detailed Description of the Invention. For example, providing rules stored in a control computer, each of which relating to at least one status of a plurality of physical objects is disclosed in at least paragraphs [0013] and [0057] – [0061]; evaluating a plurality of physical objects based on the rules to select a sample is disclosed in at least paragraphs [0056] – [0061]; marking the sample in such a way that the sample can be subjected to measurements is disclosed in at least paragraphs [0013], [0018], and [0057] – [0061]; and determining whether to perform further measurements on the sample is disclosed in at least paragraph [0062]. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement.

III. Chen Does Not Anticipate the Currently-Claimed Invention

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Chen. Each of the independent claims is directed to a method, device, computer-readable storage medium, or a computer program element for monitoring a manufacturing process of a plurality of physical objects. Generally, at least one rule relating to one or more status of one or more of the physical objects is provided. The plurality of physical objects is evaluated based on the at least one rule and a sample of the plurality of objects is selected. The sample is marked so that the sample may be subject to a measurement and a determination is made whether to perform additional measurements on the sample based on a criterion of reducing the number of measurements on the sample and avoiding redundant measurements on the sample. Chen fails to disclose at least a system that determines whether to perform additional measurements on a sample based on a criterion of reducing the number of measurements on the sample and avoiding redundant measurements on the sample.

Chen is directed to a method and system for managing quality control in a manufacturing plant. Generally, Chen discloses a system that automatically adjusts the quality-control sampling rate of physical objects produced in the manufacturing plant so

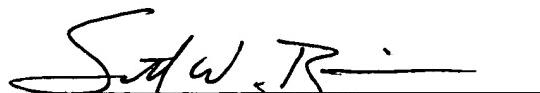
that once the production of a product becomes stable, the Chen system will decrease the quality-control sampling rate so that fewer physical objects are tested. However, Chen does not disclose or suggest changing the number of measurements that a sample is subjected to as in the currently-claimed invention. Chen only discloses changing how often a physical object is subjected to quality-control tests.

Due to the fact Chen fails to disclose or suggest at least a system that determines whether to perform additional measurements on a sample based on a criterion of reducing the number of measurements on a sample and avoiding redundant measurements on a sample, Chen necessarily does not anticipate claims 1-12. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection to the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Chen.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is therefore respectfully requested. If there are any questions concerning this Response, the Examiner is asked to phone the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4200.

Respectfully submitted,



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